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From: CLRInfo
Sent: September 24, 2021 8:23 AM
To: Ken McCormack
Cc: Maria Sushkova
Subject: CLR Info - Weekly Update - Sept 23

Importance: High

[CLR Members,](#)

Please find the latest updates on the current situation in the province.

COVID Updates

[B.C. COVID-19 pandemic update](#)

As of Thursday, Sept. 23, 87.3% (4,046,960) of eligible people 12 and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 79.9% (3,701,696) received their second dose.

In addition, 87.8% (3,799,479) of all eligible adults in B.C. have received their first dose and 80.7% (3,490,764) received their second dose.

B.C. is reporting 832 new cases of COVID-19, for a total of 181,769 cases in the province. There are 5,697 active cases of COVID-19 in the province and 173,786 people who tested positive have recovered. Of the active cases, 330 individuals are in hospital and 148 are in intensive care. The remaining people are recovering at home in self-isolation.

From Sept. 15-21, people not fully vaccinated accounted for 75.5% of cases and from Sept. 8-21, they accounted for 82.6% of hospitalizations.

Past week cases (Sept. 15-21) – Total 4,417

- Not vaccinated: 2,996 (67.8%)
- Partially vaccinated: 342 (7.7%)
- Fully vaccinated: 1,079 (24.4%)

Past two weeks cases hospitalized (Sept. 8-21) – Total 437

- Not vaccinated: 327 (74.8%)
- Partially vaccinated: 34 (7.8%)
- Fully vaccinated: 76 (17.4%)

Past week, cases per 100,000 population after adjusting for age (Sept. 15-21)

- Not vaccinated: 289.0
- Partially vaccinated: 87.9
- Fully vaccinated: 27.0

Past two weeks, cases hospitalized per 100,000 population after adjusting for age (Sept. 8-21)

- Not vaccinated: 46.5
- Partially vaccinated: 13.3
- Fully vaccinated: 1.8

After factoring for age, people not vaccinated are 25.8 times more likely to be hospitalized than those fully vaccinated.

Since December 2020, the Province has administered 7,756,634 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines.

COVID-19: Chilliwack elementary school temporarily closes to in-person learning amid outbreak

An elementary school in Chilliwack, B.C., is taking a break from in-person learning following a COVID-19 outbreak.

The Chilliwack School District said in a statement Wednesday that Promontory Heights Elementary will move to remote learning starting Thursday through the end of next week.

The district said it expects the school will resume in-person instruction on Oct. 4. A note from Fraser Health said an [outbreak was declared at the school](#) on Wednesday.

Dr. Bonnie Henry said Tuesday that the province is reversing course on notifying parents about COVID-19 exposures at schools. She added that parents and teachers from across the province have let it be known they need to be informed about the transmission of the virus and that a new system is expected to be in place by the end of the week.

Canada announces extension of flight ban from India as it prepares for the return of direct flights

As Canada prepares for the return of direct flights from India to Canada, Transport Canada is announcing an extension of the Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) that restricts all direct commercial and private passenger flights to Canada from India until September 26.

Once the restriction on direct flights expires, travellers eligible to enter Canada will be able to board direct flights from India to Canada with the [additional measures](#).

As a first step, on September 22, three direct flights from India arrived in Canada and all passengers on those flights were tested for COVID-19 upon arrival to ensure that the new measures are working.

After the resumption of direct flights, travellers who are eligible to enter Canada who depart India for Canada via an indirect route will continue to be required to obtain, within 72 hours of departure, a valid negative COVID-19 molecular test from a third country – other than India – before continuing their journey to Canada.

U.S. extends land border rules to Canada and Mexico, eases other travel measures

On Monday, Sept. 20, the Biden administration announced the U.S.-Canada and Mexico borders will be closed until at least October 21. The border has been closed since March 2020.

While travel restrictions for Canadians remain strict, the U.S. is looking to ease foreign air travel restrictions, which will allow fully vaccinated foreigners to enter the country.

Starting in November, any air traveller coming to the U.S. will need to provide proof of negative COVID-19 taken at least 72 hours prior to boarding and certification of their double-vaccination status.

The new policy announced on Monday will no longer limit travellers from specific countries like the U.K., China and India.

For unvaccinated U.S. citizens, the rules will also be tightened. Any unvaccinated American will need to be tested one day before travelling to the U.S. or leaving. Fully vaccinated passengers will not need to complete a quarantine.

While the U.S. border remains shut to Canadians, all fully vaccinated Americans have been able to travel to Canada since Aug 9. Canada also eased travel restrictions and quarantine requirements for other international travellers who were fully vaccinated earlier this month. As of Sept. 7, any traveller needed to show that they had received two vaccine shots and a negative test for COVID-19 that is no more than 72 hours old.

Pandemic and the Economy

[Updated forecast signals strong recovery for B.C.](#)

Despite ongoing uncertainty from the COVID-19 pandemic, current forecasts show an increase in revenues and a reduction in the deficit for the 2021-22 fiscal year as British Columbia's strong vaccination rates are supporting economic recovery in many sectors.

In the Province's first quarterly report, the year-end deficit is projected to be \$4.8 billion – roughly half of what was previously predicted in Budget 2021. This improvement is attributed to stronger-than-anticipated recovery in many sectors of the economy, leading to higher-than-expected revenues.

The Province's first quarterly report saw an overall increase of \$6.2 billion in provincial revenues compared to Budget 2021. This is primarily due to gains in personal and corporate income tax revenues, natural resource revenues and federal funding largely related to B.C.'s pandemic response and recovery measures. Upward changes to revenue are partially offset by higher expenses, mainly due to this year's devastating wildfires and additional spending for the delivery of key services.

B.C.'s real gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to see continued strength, growing by 6% in 2021 and, as the recovery continues, by 4% in 2022.

As announced in Budget 2021, the Province allocated \$3.25 billion in Pandemic and Recovery Contingencies to address health and safety measures related to COVID-19, targeted supports for businesses and people most affected by the pandemic, and additional funding to build B.C.'s economic recovery. This funding is in addition to last year's spending of \$10.1 billion to help support people, businesses and communities through the pandemic and into recovery.

Key supports provided to date as part of this spending include the COVID-19 paid sick leave employer reimbursement program, the Small and Medium Sized Business Grant program and the Circuit Breaker Business Relief Grant program to support businesses affected by closures, funding to support return to school measures in the K-12 sector, supports for the tourism sector, as well as one-time grants for B.C.-based events through the new Fairs, Festivals and Events Recovery Fund.

Learn More:

To read B.C.'s First Quarterly Report, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/finances/reports/quarterly-reports>

[Options for B.C.'s permanent paid sick leave available for comment](#)

British Columbians are invited to have their say on three proposed options for permanent paid sick leave shaped by their responses to the first phase of consultation.

Between Aug. 5 and Sept. 14, 2021, more than 26,000 surveys were completed by workers and employers. Feedback from the online surveys and the options paper will help create a made-in-B.C. permanent paid personal illness and injury leave.

The options paper has been posted on government's engagement site and is available for comment until Oct. 25. Three options have been developed that cover the minimum number of days: three, five and 10 days of paid sick leave. To leave a comment on the engagement site, visit: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/paidsickleave/>

Following the public engagement process, paid sick leave will be established through regulation and come into effect on Jan. 1, 2022.

Learn More:

To view the paid sick-leave options and participate in the consultation process, or learn about the consultation process, visit: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/paidsickleave/>

For more information on B.C.'s employment standards, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards>

[Canada Employment Insurance Commission sets the 2022 Employment Insurance Premium Rate](#)

The Canada Employment Insurance Commission (CEIC) made available the Actuarial Report and its summary for the 2022 Employment Insurance (EI) premium rate. The rate is set at \$1.58 per \$100 of insurable earnings for employees and \$2.21 for employers who pay 1.4 times the employee rate, which is unchanged from the 2020 and 2021 premium rate.

Each year, the CEIC is responsible for setting the annual premium rate based on the seven-year break-even rate forecasted by the EI Senior Actuary. The [Senior Actuary's report](#) on the 2022 EI premium rate and the [CEIC's summary](#) of that report are available online.

The Senior Actuary forecasted the seven-year break-even premium rate to be \$1.81 per \$100 of insurable earnings from 2022 to 2028 that would balance out the EI Operating Account at the end of 2028.

On August 2020, as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada used its authority under the *Employment Insurance Act* to temporarily limit the change in the premium rate to zero in order to freeze the EI premium rate for 2021 and 2022 at the 2020 level.

The CEIC also announced that the Maximum Insurable Earnings (MIE) for 2022 will increase to \$60,300 from \$56,300 in 2021. The MIE is indexed on an annual basis and represents the ceiling up to which EI premiums are collected and the maximum amount insured under the EI program. The maximum annual EI contribution for a worker will increase by \$63.20 to \$952.74 (up \$88.48 for employers to \$1,333.84 per employee).

[The Premium Reduction Program](#) will provide roughly \$1.159 billion in premium reductions in 2022 to registered employers and their employees, shared 7/12 and 5/12 respectively, in recognition of savings generated to the EI program by employer registered short-term wage-loss plans.

Vaccination News

[Pfizer-BioNTech say COVID-19 vaccine safe, protective in kids aged 5-11](#)

Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech said on Monday their COVID-19 vaccine induced a robust immune response in five- to 11-year-olds, and they plan to ask for authorization to use the vaccine in children in that age range in Canada, the United States, Europe and elsewhere as soon as possible.

The companies said the vaccine generated an immune response in the five- to 11-year-olds in their Phase II/III clinical trial that matched what they had previously observed in 16- to 25-year-olds. The safety profile was also generally comparable to the older age group, they said.

Pfizer Canada spokesperson Christina Antoniou said to CBC News that the company plans to file the data to Health Canada but couldn't provide specific timelines at this time.

According to Health Canada, all manufacturers of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in Canada are conducting or planning studies in adolescents and younger children, including children from 6 months to 11 years of age. It said it anticipates vaccine manufacturers will provide data regarding children in the coming months, but has so far not received any submission for the approval of any COVID-19 vaccine in children under 12 years of age.

The five- to 11-year-olds were given two shots of a 10-microgram dose of the vaccine, one-third the dose size that has been given to people 12 and older. The companies expect data on how well the vaccine works in children two to five years of age and children between six months and two years of age as soon as the fourth quarter of this year.

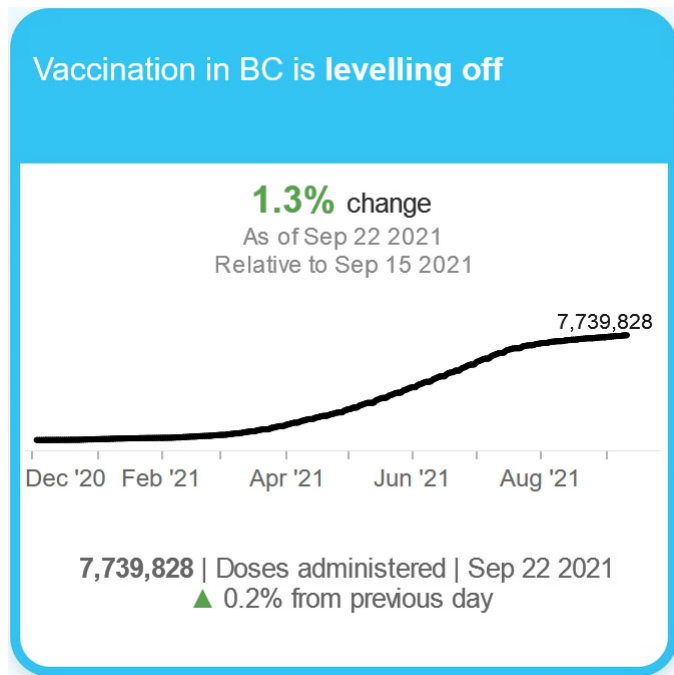
Unlike the larger clinical trial the drugmakers previously conducted in adults, the 2,268-participant pediatric trial was not primarily designed to measure the vaccine's efficacy by comparing the number of COVID-19 cases in vaccine recipients to those who received a placebo. Instead, the trial compares the amount of neutralizing antibodies induced by the vaccine in the children to the response of older recipients in the adult trial.

A Pfizer spokesperson said the companies may later disclose vaccine efficacy from the trial but there had not been enough cases of COVID-19 yet among the participants to make that determination.

The companies said the vaccine was well-tolerated, with side effects generally comparable to those observed in participants between 16 and 25 years of age.

A second U.S. vaccine maker, Moderna, also is studying its shots in elementary school-aged children.

Immunization dashboard



Stay safe.

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